

VZCZCXRO1444
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHDS #1319 1311426
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 111426Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0497
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ADDIS ABABA 001319

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF DAS YAMAMOTO AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: PM APPOINTS ADDIS ABABA CARETAKER
GOVERNMENT, CUDP WALKS OUT

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 00839

[1](#)B. ADDIS ABABA 01160

[1](#)1. SUMMARY: In a May 10 address to parliament, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi commended the efforts of some CUDP electees to take over administration of the city of Addis Ababa. Citing the inability of the electees to achieve the required quorum, however, Meles spoke of the need to appoint a caretaker government for the city. Meles named former World Bank official Berhanu Deressa as mayor and a credible team of eight technocrats and a city manager to back him up. Meles announced the transfer of responsibility for day-to-day security in the capital to the federal level. The PM reiterated the government's intention to hold re-run elections for the city government in one year. Opposition parties generally responded negatively to Prime Minister's plan, though some voted in favor it. Members of the reconstituted CUDP voiced their displeasure and then walked out of the parliamentary session in protest. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. In his statement to parliament, Meles said the government believed Addis Ababa should be administered by its elected leaders and stated that the Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party's (CUDP) attempt to take over the city, despite harassment and intimidation from within their own ranks, was commendable and worthy of respect. However, the opposition's and National Electoral Board's (NEB) efforts to convince a sufficient number of elected officials to take over the administration of the city was not successful, even after extending the deadline several times. As previously decided by parliament (ref A), the Prime Minister said the only other option was to conduct another election within one year and appoint a caretaker government. Meles explained that while the caretaker government would retain most of its authority spelled out by the city charter, such as appointing local-level officials and handling budget and taxes issues, authority over Addis Ababa's police and security forces would be transferred to the federal government temporarily.

[1](#)3. Following Meles' announcement of the caretaker government, opposition MPs took to the floor. The newly-formed CUDP (ref B) called the appointment of a caretaker administration a defeat for democracy and blamed the GOE for their party's failure to muster quorum, charging that the detention of CUDP leaders, including mayor-elect Berhanu Nega, was unwarranted and divisive. They called for resolving political problems through dialogue, and stated that they did not want to be part of the process (of appointing a caretaker administration) and walked out of the parliamentary session in protest. CUDP Whip Temesgen Zewdie later called the walk out "symbolic" and clarified that the CUDP intended to remain

engaged in parliament. Parliament approved the appointment of the caretaker government with 300 votes in favor, 54 against, and 8 abstentions.

14. Caretaker administration appointees:

MAYOR

Berhanu Deressa

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Alemnesh Woldeberhan

Yitbarek Beferd

Muluneh Wordofa

Sherif Keri

Hagos Hailu

Berhanu Woldetensae

Misganaw Argaw

Bekele Fula

CITY MANAGER

Wubshet Berhanu

HUDDLESTON